

I claim:

1. A tool for shelling a crustacean to remove meat from a tail shell thereof, the tool comprising:
 - a handle;
 - an elongate rod extending from said handle, said elongate rod having a longitudinal slit extending inwardly from a distal end thereof, said longitudinal slit defining an upper rod fork and a lower rod fork of said elongate rod.
2. A tool as in claim 1, wherein said upper rod fork terminates in a blunt, generally spherical tip that extends beyond the distal end of said lower rod fork.
3. A tool as in claim 2, wherein said distal end of said lower rod fork is generally tapered and rounded.
4. A tool as in claim 1, further comprising a finger ring attached to said handle by means of a tether.
5. A tool as in claim 4, wherein said finger ring is adjustable in diameter.
6. A tool as in claim 4, wherein said tether comprises a length of cord that permits said handle and rod to hang inside the palm of a user's hand when said tool is not in use.
7. A tool as in claim 4, wherein said tether comprises a length of plastic material that permits said handle and rod to hang inside the palm of a user's hand when said tool is not in use.
8. A tool as in claim 1, wherein said handle is generally disk-shaped and positioned to be coplanar with said slit in said elongate rod.

9. A process for shelling a crustacean to permit removal of meat from a tail shell thereof, the process comprising:

separating a head/body portion of said crustacean from said tail shell;

providing a shelling tool having a handle and an elongate rod extending away from said handle, said elongate rod having a longitudinal slit extending inwardly from a distal end thereof, said longitudinal slit defining an upper rod fork and a lower rod fork of said elongate rod;

sliding said lower rod fork into an open end of said tail shell along an inside surface of an underside of said tail shell such that said underside of said tail shell is guided into said slit a desired distance; and

rotating said tool about a longitudinal axis thereof to thereby produce a crack in said underside of said tail shell and expose the meat contained therein.

10. A process as in claim 9, wherein said tool is rotated approximately 90 degrees.

11. A process as in claim 10, wherein said tool is rotated in a selected direction.

12. A process as in claim 9, wherein said tool includes a finger ring and a tether coupling said finger ring to said tool, said process further comprising:

sliding said finger ring over a desired finger of a user's hand.

13. A process as in claim 12, further comprising:

removing said tool from the cracked tail shell;

releasing said tool to depend from said finger ring;

manually widening said crack in said tail shell to further expose said

meat; and

removing said meat exposed by the widened crack in said tail shell.

14. A process as in claim 9, wherein said crustacean is a crawfish.

15. A process as in claim 9, wherein said crustacean is a lobster.